come a squire; and talks as familiarly of John of
Gaunt, as if he had been sworn brother to him s

fool's cap with ass's ears, and a thin wooden dagger, such as is still retained in the modern figures of Harlequin and Scaramouch.

Minsheu, and others of our more modern criticks, strain hard to find out the etymology of the word, and fetch it from the Greek ; probably we need look no further for it than the old French word *Vis*, which signified the same as *Visage* does now. From this in part came *Visdase*, a word common among them for a fool, which Menage says is but a corruption from *Vis d'asne*, the face or head of an ass. It may be imagined therefore that *Visdase*, or *Vis d'asne*, was the name first given to this foolish theatrical figure, and that by vulgar use it was shortened to plain *Vis* or *Vice*.

HANMER.

The word *Vice* is an abbreviation of *Device ;* for in our old dramatick shows, where he was first exhibited, he was nothing more than an artificial figure, a puppet moved by machinery, and then originally called a *Device* or *Vice*. In these representations he was a constant and the most popular character, afterwards adopted into the early comedy. The smith's machine called a *vice*, is an abbreviation of the same sort.— Hamlet calls his uncle "a *vice* of kings," a fantastick *smdfactitious* image of majesty, & *mere puppet* of royalty. See Jonson's Alchymist, Act I. Sc. III.:

"And on your stall & *puppet* with a *vice*."

T. WARTON.

To each of the proposed etymologies of *Vice* in the note there seem to be solid objections.

Hanmer's derivation from the French *visdase* is unsupported by any thing like authority. This word occurs in no ancient French writer as a theatrical character, and has only been used by modern ones in the sense of ass or fool, and then probably by corruption : there being good reason to suppose that it was originally a very obscene expression. It is seldom, if ever, that an English term is made up from a French one, unless the thing itself so expressed be likewise borrowed; and it is certain that in the old French moralities and comedies there is no character similar to the *Vice*.

Mr. Warton says it is an abbreviation of *device*, because in the old dramatical shows this character was nothing more than a *puppet moved by machinery*, and then originally called a

device. But where is the proof of these assertions! and why should *one puppet in particular* be termed a *device ?* As to what he states concerning the name of the smith's machine, the answer is, that it is immediately derived from the French *vis*, a screw, and neither probably from *device ;* for the machine in question is not more a device than many other mechanical contrivances. Mr. Warton has likewise informed us that the vice had appeared as a puppet *before*